



**Agriculture As a Career**  
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All throughout my childhood, I often heard my grandparents lament over the changing face of agriculture. One side of my family lost their dairy farm in the mid 1960's and carry the heartbreak with them to this day. The other side of my family was able to continue farming, and from a young age I was privileged with the opportunity to learn, hands on, about the changing face of agriculture. My ties to the land are far deeper than superficial, as I am the eighth generation to cut wheat on the land you see in my picture. These all-consuming roots not only dictate who I am, but serve as continuous influences to who I will become. There is no other avenue for my passions then a career in agriculture, and I am dedicated to a life of servant-based leadership, innovative developments, critical analysis, and cultural sensitivity in order to best serve my country and its agricultural sector.

Leadership development and international exposure began early on for me, with my first international endeavor taking place when I was 13; I traveled with my church to the Philippines with the mission of investing in local impoverished villages through spiritual interaction and economic development projects. When I was 16, I traveled to the Ukraine with much the same mission, serving as a peer counselor for other members of my team, a worship leader for our outreaches, and a team leader for our economic development project: a massive play structure for a local orphanage. These international exposures helped mold my consuming pre-occupation with international affairs and afforded me great insight into the diversity of cultural perspectives. Leadership, I believe, is not about the prestige associated with being a leader, but about those whom we are leading. It is these experiences which have helped to shape my professional aspirations into becoming an International Trade Specialist for agricultural commodities, specifically with respect to livestock commodities.

Globalization and international interdependence can hardly be ignored. My grandparents felt the creative destruction of technology adaptation into agriculture half a century ago – establishing the U.S.' position as an agricultural production leader in the international realm...a position that requires great sensitivity and leadership. The U.S.' ability to utilize its comparative advantages in agricultural production (namely through technological advancement, research and analysis, and educational systems which allow the implementation of production advancements), puts us at the forefront of an exciting era in agriculture. To whom much is given much is required, however, thus necessitating effective domestic and international policy formation, research and analysis into sustainable agricultural practices with respect to food security issues, and the realization of progressive international relationships. The dynamic structure of the U.S. farm system can no longer be dealt with on a singular, aggregate level, but should be tailored so as to elicit the most benefit for both sectors of the current production system: smaller more concentrated farms, and larger more industrial farms. International food security issues fuel the need for sustainable agricultural practices, in order to ensure a food supply conducive to aiding international partners and thereby also reasserting the U.S. position as a leader in agricultural production markets. The face of agriculture is changing domestically and abroad, and it is my sincere hope that I will be able to leverage my educational training and sincere passions towards the progressive advancement of US livestock markets.

Together the aggregate agricultural community should work collectively to ensure timely, well-planned solutions to the current and potential issues facing our industry. The Agricultural Outlook Forum is monumental in presentation quality, and in the timeliness of represented issues. This opportunity would increase my knowledge of current industry affairs, and afford me professional opportunities I would not

otherwise be able to receive. Let's work together to be diligent in our servant-based leadership to ensure our continuation as a dominant and impactful force in this dynamic and challenging industry.